

Student number control policy

Paul Clark

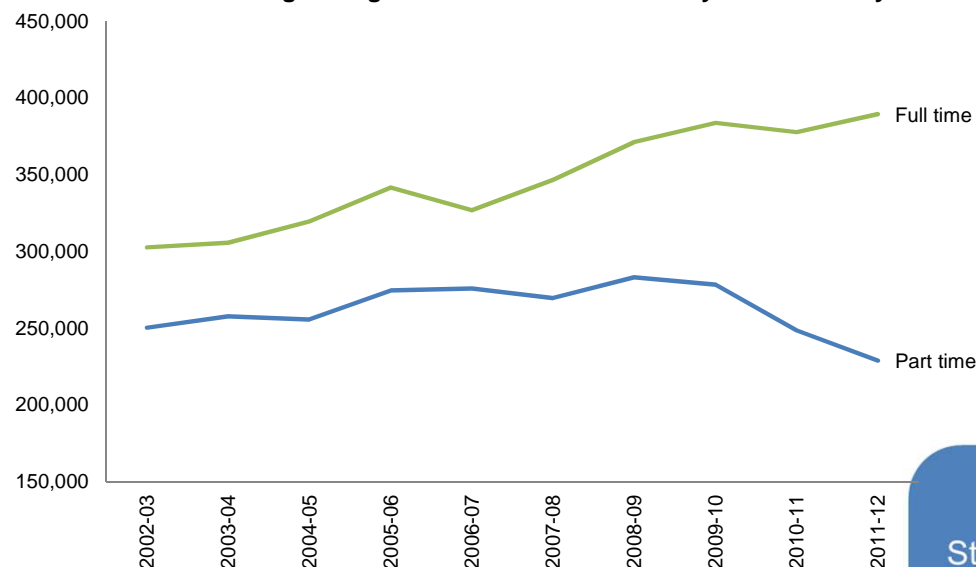
Director of Policy, Universities UK

Guardian higher education summit

27 February 2013

Student number controls in 2012-13

First year UK and EU domiciled enrolments to undergraduate courses at English higher education institutions by mode of study



Students with entry qualifications equivalent to AAB at A level and above

- Institutions free to recruit as many applicants with AAB+ as they want
- Estimate of numbers based on 2010-11 data and an assumption of growth by 2012-13
- Estimated to account for just under 77,000 of all entrants in 2012-13, or 85,000 if clinical medical places are included

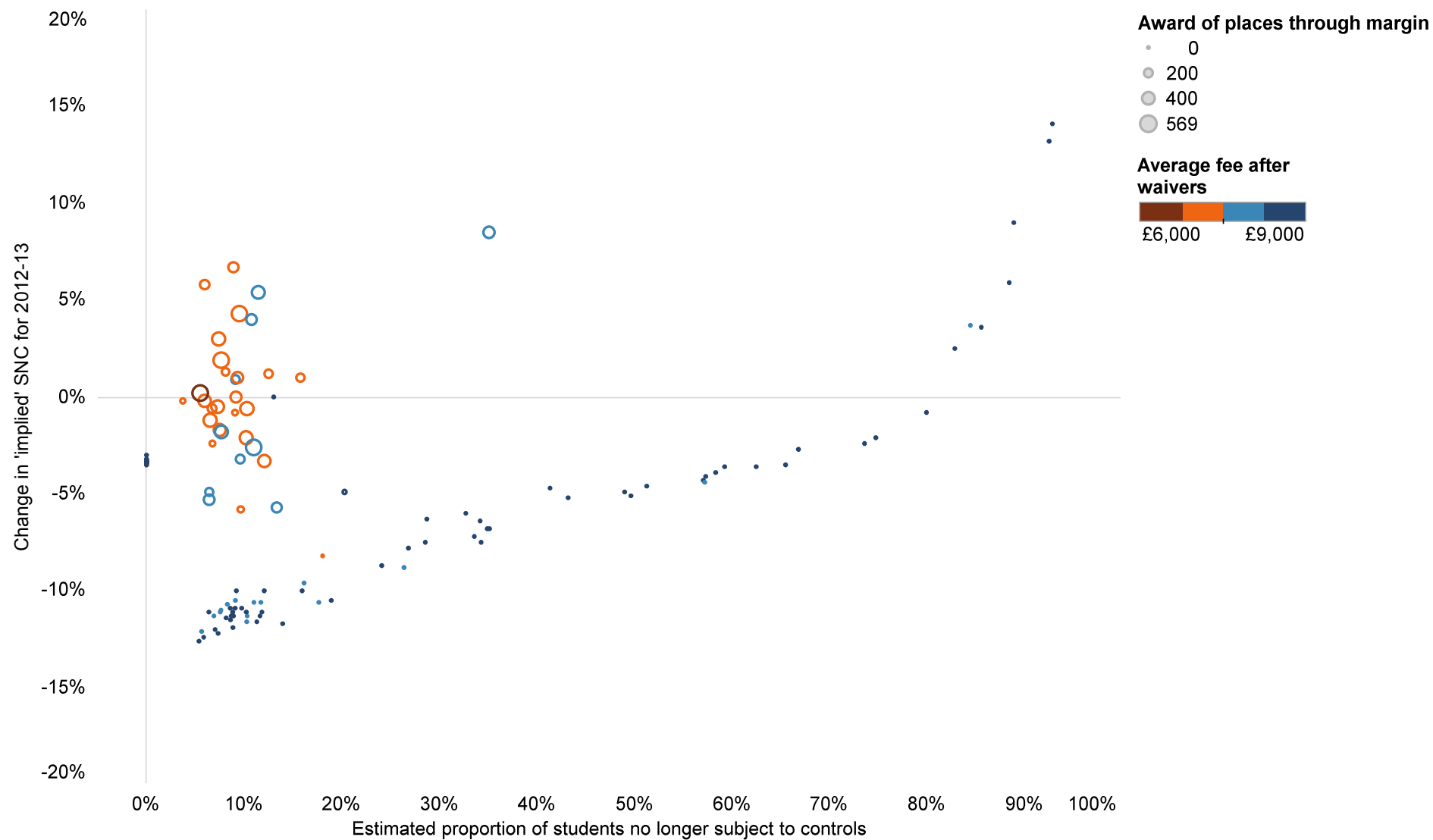
Places allocated through a competitive margin

- Re-allocation of 20,000 places to providers with average fees (after waivers) of below £7,500 per year
- Margin created through a pro rata cut, of roughly 9%, to student number control limits at all HEFCE funded institutions

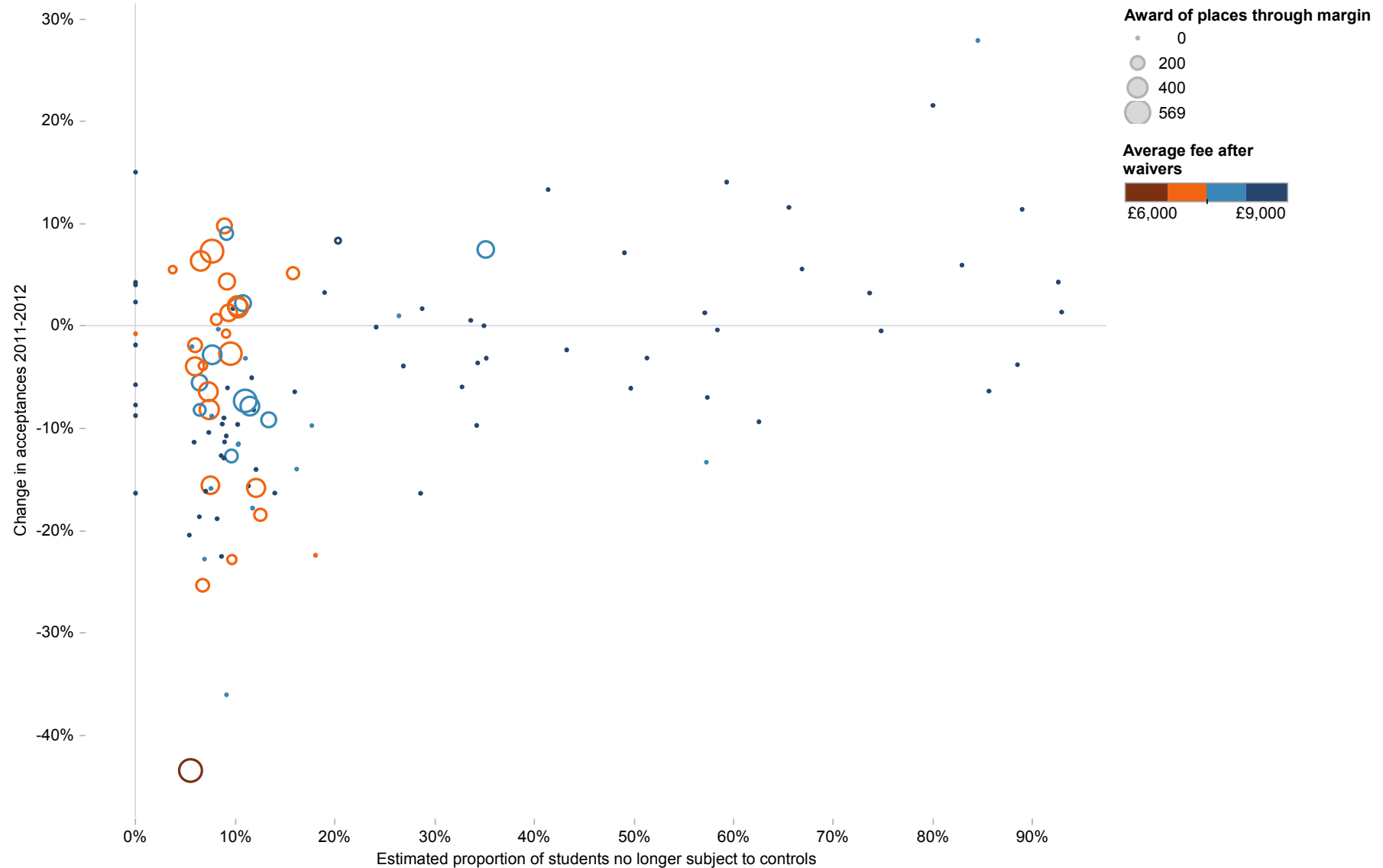
Assessment of the policy impact

- Overall reduction in acceptances, but causes still not clear:
 - Demographics
 - Deferral behaviour
 - Changes in composition of applicant pool
 - Mature students
 - Part-time students
 - Wider economic effects
- Flight to employability
- No adverse impact on disadvantaged students
- No evidence of price sensitivity

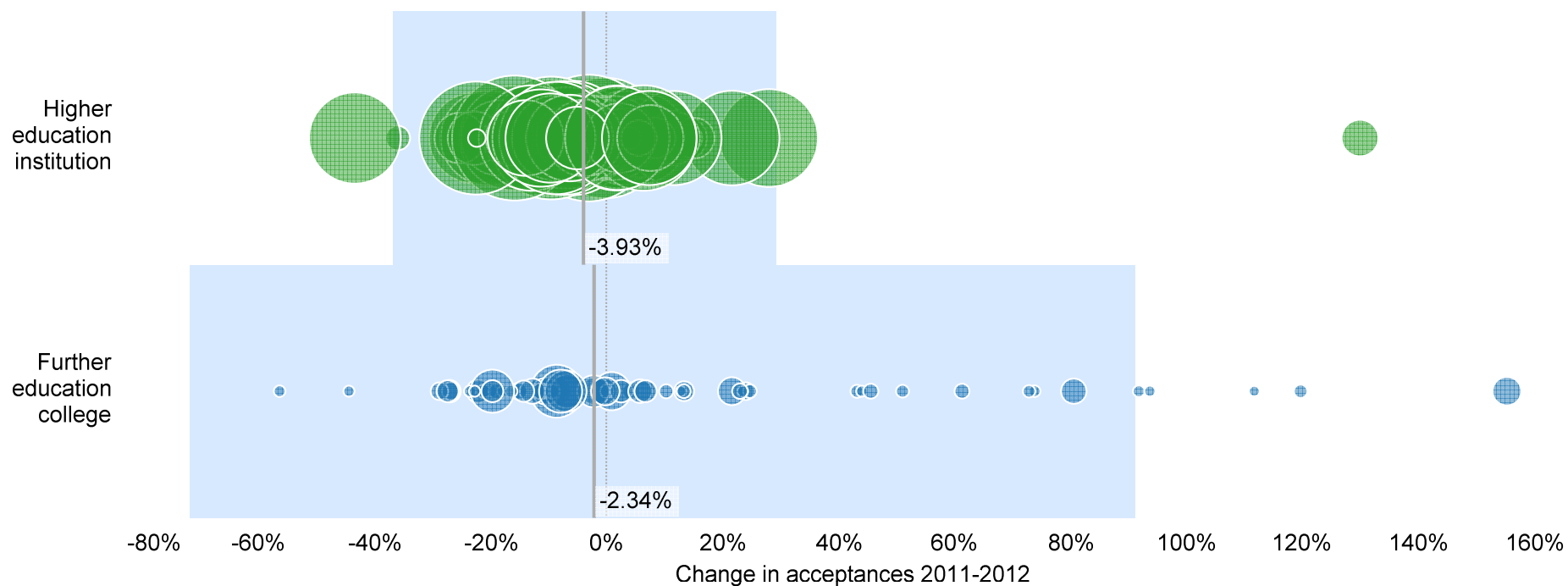
Impact of SNC proposals on HEIs in 2012-13



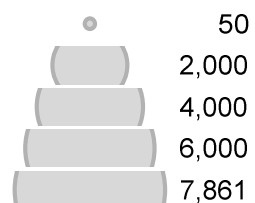
Overall outcomes for 2012-13



Summary of change in acceptances by providers: 2011 to 2012



UCAS acceptances 2012



Note: Highlighted section represents +/- 2 standard deviations from mean

Future issues (1)

- Concerns regarding incomplete understanding of impact of current reforms
- Difficulties in moving the high grade threshold further due to greater range of equivalent qualifications, and latent unrealised demand (e.g. from BTEC students)
- Overall number of places must be maintained in the future. Any under-spend on student support should be used to:
 - relax student number controls
 - Reduce penalties for over-recruitment
 - Remove or reduce the impact of margin exercises
 - Recycle into other priority areas of public funding support for higher education
- Not clear where increased flexibility would come from if demand returns or increases

Future issues (2)

Student funding

- Student number control policy closely connected with sustainability of the fee and loan system
- Current imperative to control costs causes distortions in the market
- Future pressure on student support costs likely to constrain overall policy-making

Deregulation

- Future liberalisation of student number control policy is desirable, but only when the full impact of the current system is understood

Skills growth

- Need to take a more broadly-based approach to policy on skills, qualifications, and the supply of students
- Future imperative to expand the system to contribute to economic growth

Creating new markets

- Coordinating policy on student funding and student number controls to relax constraints will help open up new domestic markets
- Combined with integration of new forms of delivery
- Integrated approach needed to meet the demands of a modern, mass higher education system